Amendments to the Claims

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application.

1-9. (Canceled)

10. (Previously Presented) A method of providing a voice user interface for a user comprising:

enabling the user to specify individual character traits desired in a virtual host, wherein the specified character traits are used to select a consistent personality for the virtual host;

storing the specified character traits in a user profile having preference information for the user; and

generating the virtual host with the consistent personality in accordance with the specified character traits.

11. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 10, wherein the specified character traits comprise information defining a tone of voice for the virtual host.

12. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 10, wherein the specified character traits comprise information defining a speed of voice for the virtual host.

13. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 10, wherein the specified character traits comprise information defining a background for the virtual host.

14. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 10, wherein the specified character traits comprise information defining a sex for the virtual host.

15. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 10, wherein the specified character traits comprise information defining an accent for the virtual host.

16. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 10, wherein the specified character traits comprise information defining a formality level of a conversational style for the virtual host.

17. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 16, wherein the user profile further includes user interaction history information, the method further comprising: adjusting the conversational style based on the user interaction history information.

18. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 17, wherein adjusting comprises changing the formality level according to a level of user experience with the voice user interface.

19-55. (Canceled)

56. (Previously Presented) A method of providing a voice interface to an end user comprising:

specifying individual character traits desired in a virtual host, wherein the specified character traits are used to select a consistent personality for the virtual host, wherein the individual character traits are specified by the end user of the voice interface;

storing the specified character traits in a profile having preference information; and

generating the virtual host with the consistent personality in accordance with the specified character traits.

57. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 56, wherein the specified character traits comprise information defining a tone of voice for the virtual host.

58. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 56, wherein the specified character traits comprise information defining a speed of voice for the virtual host.

59. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 56, wherein the specified character traits comprise information defining a background for the virtual host.

60. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 56, wherein the specified character traits comprise information defining a sex for the virtual host.

61. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 56, wherein the specified character traits comprise information defining an accent for the virtual host.

62. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 56, wherein the specified character traits comprise information defining a formality level of a conversational style for the virtual host.

63. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 62, wherein the profile further includes interaction history information, the method further comprising: adjusting the conversational style based on the interaction history information.

64. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 63, wherein adjusting comprises changing the formality level according to a level of experience with the voice interface.

65. (Previously Presented) A system for providing a voice interface to an end user, the system comprising:

a memory;

logic to enable the end user to specify individual character traits desired in a virtual host, wherein the specified character traits are used to select a consistent personality for the virtual host;

logic to store the specified character traits in a profile having preference information within the memory;

logic to generate the virtual host with the consistent personality in accordance with the specified character traits; and

a processor operable to process logic.

66. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 65, wherein the specified character traits comprise information defining a tone of voice for the virtual host.

67. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 65, wherein the specified character traits comprise information defining a speed of voice for the virtual host.

68. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 65, wherein the specified character traits comprise information defining a background for the virtual host.

69. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 65, wherein the specified character traits comprise information defining a sex for the virtual host.

70. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 65, wherein the specified character traits comprise information defining an accent for the virtual host.

71. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 65, wherein the specified character traits comprise information defining a formality level of a conversational style for the virtual host.

72. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 71, wherein the profile further includes interaction history information, the system further comprising:

logic to adjust the conversational style based on the interaction history information.

73. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 72, wherein adjusting the conversational style based on the interaction history information comprises changing the formality level according to a level of experience with the voice interface.

74. (Previously Presented) A computer program product comprising a computer usable medium having computer program logic recorded thereon for enabling a processor to provide a voice interface to an end user, the computer program logic comprising:

specifying means for enabling a processor to specify individual character traits desired in a virtual host, wherein the specified character traits are used to select a consistent personality for the virtual host, wherein the individual character traits are specified by the end user of the voice interface;

storing means for enabling a processor to store the specified character traits in a profile having preference information; and

generating means for enabling a processor to generate the virtual host with the consistent personality in accordance with the specified character traits.

75. (Previously Presented) The computer program product of claim 74, wherein the specified character traits comprise information defining a tone of voice for the virtual host.

76. (Previously Presented) The computer program product of claim 74, wherein the specified character traits comprise information defining a speed of voice for the virtual host.

77. (Previously Presented) The computer program product of claim 74, wherein the specified character traits comprise information defining a background for the virtual host.

78. (Previously Presented) The computer program product of claim 74, wherein the specified character traits comprise information defining a sex for the virtual host.

79. (Previously Presented) The computer program product of claim 74, wherein the specified character traits comprise information defining an accent for the virtual host.

80. (Previously Presented) The computer program product of claim 74, wherein the specified character traits comprise information defining a formality level of a conversational style for the virtual host.

81. (Previously Presented) The computer program product of claim 80, wherein the profile further includes interaction history information, the computer program logic further comprising:

adjusting means for enabling a processor to adjust the conversational style based on the interaction history information.

82. (Previously Presented) The computer program product of claim 81, wherein adjusting comprises changing the formality level according to a level of experience with the voice interface.

83. (Previously Presented) A method of providing a voice user interface for a user comprising:

enabling the user to specify individual character traits desired in a virtual host, wherein the specified character traits are used to select a consistent personality for the virtual host;

storing the specified character traits in a user profile including user interaction history information;

generating the virtual host with the consistent personality in accordance with the specified character traits;

querying the user for permission to adjust a conversational style of the virtual host if user interaction history reaches a threshold; and

adjusting the conversational style if the user grants permission.

84. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 83, wherein adjusting the conversational style comprises changing a formality level of the conversational style according to a level of user experience with the voice user interface.

85. (Previously Presented) A system for providing a voice interface, the system comprising:

a memory;

logic to specify individual character traits desired in a virtual host, wherein the specified character traits are used to select a consistent personality for the virtual host;

logic to store the specified character traits in a profile that includes interaction history information within the memory;

logic to generate the virtual host with the consistent personality in accordance with the specified character traits;

logic to query the user for permission to adjust a conversational style of the virtual host if interaction history reaches a threshold;

logic to adjust the conversational style if the user grants permission to adjust the conversational style; and

a processor operable to process logic.

86. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 85, adjusting the conversational style comprises changing a formality level of the conversational style according to a level of experience with the voice user interface.

87. (Previously Presented) A computer program product comprising a computer usable medium having computer program logic recorded thereon for enabling a processor to provide a voice interface, the computer program logic comprising:

specifying means for enabling the processor to specify individual character traits desired in a virtual host, wherein the specified character traits are used to select a consistent personality for the virtual host;

storing means for enabling the processor to store the specified character traits in a profile having preference information;

generating means for enabling the processor to generate the virtual host with the consistent personality in accordance with the specified character traits;

querying means for enabling the processor to query a user for permission to adjust a conversational style of the virtual host if interaction history reaches a threshold; and

adjusting means for enabling the processor to adjust the conversational style based on the interaction history information, if the user grants permission.

88. (Previously Presented) The computer program product of claim 87, wherein adjusting comprises changing a formality level of the conversational style according to a level of experience with the voice interface.